



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Environmental Center**  
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0775

## SCR 199 ENCOURAGING AND PROMOTING THE USE OF NATIVE PLANTS IN LANDSCAPING

Statement for  
Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Energy and Ocean Resources  
Public Hearing - April 13, 1988

By  
Charles Lamoureux, Botany  
John Harrison, Environmental Center  
Jacquelin Miller, Environmental Center

SCR 199 requests that the State of Hawaii encourage and promote the use of native plants in landscaping and other projects by government agencies and private concerns, and requests that future State landscaping plans use appropriate species within their projects where feasible.

Our statement on this resolution does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Adoption of the resolution would serve to call attention to the role that native plants could play in landscaping, in terms of adding beauty to landscaped areas, helping people to learn more about the unique plants of Hawaii, and affording habitat for native wildlife. It could result in increasing the numbers of individuals of rare species, and the range of their distribution, thus helping to protect them from threats of extinction.

There is need for caution, however. When rare species are brought into gardens and used in landscaping, it may create a demand for the plants which is most readily met by collecting more plants from the wild. In most cases this is a losing proposition, as wild populations are depleted to provide landscaping material. The sad result of this action has been demonstrated recently in the deserts of southwestern North America where cactus "rustling" has become an important crime problem. Thus, we suggest that another clause be added to the resolution to indicate that its intent is to encourage the propagation of native species in nurseries and botanical gardens and their distribution from there to the nursery trade, while discouraging the actual collection of native species from the wild for

transplanting. While endangered species are protected from collection by existing legislation, species which are rare, but not legally endangered, have no such protection, and wild populations could be greatly depleted, or even wiped out, if landscapers began harvesting wild plants.

With such an amendment, we would support the intent of SCR 199.

It may also be useful to consider the definition of "native" in the context of this resolution. Biologists consider Hawaiian "native" species to be those which grow or live naturally in Hawaii without having been brought to Hawaii by humans. A synonym for "native" in this sense is "indigenous," and indigenous species are legally defined this way in HRS Section 195D-2.

---